



TERRY E. BRANSTAD, Governor  
KIM REYNOLDS, Lt. Governor

CASA and ICFCRB Programs  
JUDGE GERALD W. MAGEE, Chairperson  
JAMES A. HENNESSEY, Administrator



## CASA REPORT TO THE COURT

### PERMANENCY HEARING

Hearing Date and Time: 6/25/2007 at 1:30 PM

**Jan Shelton**  
CASA Coordinator

**Allie Franks**  
CASA Coach

**Miki Getz**  
CASA Advocate  
**Court Appointed:** 8/2/06

<b>Regarding:</b>	<b>JVJV:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Age:</b>
Aubrey Myers	017531	04/07/91	16 years
Jackson Myers	017532	06/15/95	11 years
Shiloh Myers	017533	09/10/99	7 years

**Report Date:** 06/19/2007

**Reporting Period:** This report covers the period from April 13, 2007 to date of this report.

Name	Relationship to the Case	Face	Phone or Email	Attempts
Aubrey Myers	Dependent child	2	7	
Jackson Myers	Dependent child	1	8	
Shiloh Myers	Dependent child	4		
Amanda Myers	Mother	2	5	2
Chris Lite	Aubrey's therapist	2	1	
Lori O.	Aubrey/Amanda's therapist		1	1
Kim James	Jackson's Counselor	2	1	
Emma Jones	Shiloh's Foster Mother	3		
John Rugby	Children's Attorney/GAL		2	
Crissy Jacobs	DHS Case Manager	3	4	
Cindy Malcolm	FSRP Provider	2		
Mrs. Bleil	Shiloh's teacher	1	1	

**Current Placement of the child(ren):** Aubrey and Jackson are placed in separate residential care facilities; Shiloh is placed in family foster care.

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December 2016

**Information obtained from interviews, visits and case file documentation:**

***Shiloh Myers, dependent child***

Shiloh remains in family foster care where she appears to be comfortable and has had no behavioral issues. Shiloh's behaviors have improved greatly and she is no longer physically aggressive with others in the foster home. She did well in school this year and will be moving on to second grade in the Fall. She is developmentally on target.

Shiloh has never made any negative remarks regarding her foster home and appears happy. She repeatedly expresses her desire to "go home to Mom and Poppie", her grandfather who lives with her mother. She misses her siblings and cries as phone calls draw to a close.

Shiloh has been attending Girls, Inc. since the first week of June and enjoys the activities the program provides. She especially likes playing with the girls she knows from church.

Shiloh has visits with her mother twice a week, supervised by Cindy Malcolm, Kidz Connection. The visits reportedly go well and Shiloh and mom cook together, do art activities or go to movies. Ms. Malcolm provides assistance with Shiloh "as needed" when Mrs. Jones, foster mother, has concerns.

***Jackson Myers, dependent child***

Jackson continues in his placement at the Residential Treatment. He continues to struggle in managing his anger and remains physically assaultive toward staff. He continues to take his medication and attends therapy.

To date, he's had two phone calls with his mother in June. During my visit 5/5/07 with Jackson, he proudly reported that he was at Level II-2. Jackson enjoys sharing pictures and video clips between his siblings and longingly speaks of being together again.

***Aubrey Myers, dependent child***

Aubrey remains in placement at the F Residential Treatment Program. She also continues to struggle with her behaviors. While she continues to have visitations with their mother, staff reports that Aubrey and her mother belittle each other during these visits.

My visit with Aubrey on 5/8/07 was spent with Aubrey sharing her artwork with me. She discussed pictures selected for a montage and how they related to her life. The themes focused on her siblings and her faith. She also depicted things that she did not want to have in her life: marijuana, guns and violence. The posters were given to me to show her siblings. She also writes and records songs. In her "R & B" song, she expresses regret for things she has done, she takes responsibility for the problems of her family, and she expresses the importance of her faith that sustains her. The "rap" she wrote for her mom indicates that Aubrey feels regret for how she treated her mom, that she "would lie for you; cry for you; die for you". She expresses regret for the "one small act that got me here". My interpretation of this song is that it is a plea to be together again as a family.

During our visit on 6/7/07, she expanded upon her ideas since our last visit and was proud of the

finished songs. She shared poems about topics including anger, love, and violence that described situations she had experienced (being separated from her family) and situations she had observed in others (women who love men who treat them badly).

She describes considerable preoccupation with concerns of her family-her past, their present separation, and what the future holds for each of them. She told me that this "stress" accounted for her poor grades: mostly Ds; one C and one F. She admitted that greater effort and requesting help would make a difference; however, she expressed that history and civics held no interest for her whatsoever.

Our time together is always enjoyable. She is cheerful, playful, serious, and insightful and displays an increasingly greater sense of maturity and understanding. I challenge her regarding many issues and she remains respectful and constructive. She verbalizes commitment to her program and believes that if *she* tries hard enough, she will be able to go home to her mother, given that mom remains employed.

***Amanda Myers, mother***

Following the discussion in court (4/20/07) stressing mother's responsibility to connect with each treatment center, I left two messages for Amanda to discuss this with me. I told her that I was willing to give the children's counselors a "heads up" that she would be calling to make these arrangements. The messages were not returned. On 5/1/07, I reached her and told her that both staffs were eager to make this work. Her initial response was great annoyance and she stated, "I don't have time for this. It's not going to happen." After some brief persuasion and clarification, she returned my call within five minutes of hanging up, reporting that arrangements had been made with both facilities.

The number of bi-weekly phone conferences that have taken place include two with Residential and two with F Residential (as of 6/12/07). This reflects a 7-week interval since the previous court date. Amanda has taken the role of initiator consistently and has experienced waiting ten minutes for a call that the center had agreed to make, finally placing the call herself and holding while Jackson was located and brought to the phone. One arranged call was overlooked because he went on a field trip.

Amanda began working at Bybo Call Center the first week of May and works 40 hours a week. As of 6/12/07, she continues to be employed full time. She reports that she greatly enjoys her job, "and even if I didn't, I'd keep it for my kids".

Amanda has been receiving individual counseling at Wabashaw Mental Health since April. Her therapist, D. Whitell, reports that Amanda has attended each session except for one in which she rescheduled. Her therapist describes her as personable and reports an increase in self-esteem since getting a job. She has expressed a sincere desire to learn how to interact more effectively with her children without getting angry. Her therapist identified Amanda's boyfriend, Josh Carr, as perhaps the biggest factor in her irritability and stress level.

***Samuel Bleake, putative father of Shiloh***

Mr. Bleake has not presented for paternity testing and has not been involved in services or interactions; therefore I have not had any contact with him.

***Edgar Von Drake, putative father of Aubrey***

Mr. Von Drake has not presented for paternity testing and has not been involved in services or interactions; therefore I have not had any contact with him.

***Crissy Jacobs, DHS Case Manager***

Ms. Jacobs indicated that DHS recommends an extension of time to work toward reunification of the children with their mother. Six more months will give Jackson and Aubrey more time to complete their respective treatment programs. Reunification efforts with Shiloh and Amanda will continue with the goal of increasing visits to include overnights.

Due to continuing relationship/trust issues between Aubrey and her mother, Ms. Jacobs is exploring relative placement options to include Aubrey's grandmother. DHS recommends the concurrent plan for Aubrey to be transfer guardianship to a relative.

***John Rugby, Children's Attorney/GAL***

Mr. Rugby indicated that he is in agreement with the DHS recommendation and plan to request an extension of time as the permanency order for the children.

***Cindy Malcolm, Kidz Connection FSRP provider***

Ms. Malcolm supervises weekly visits between Amanda and Shiloh. She reports that Amanda is consistently at home when a visit is scheduled. Since the 5/21/07 visit, Amanda has consistently followed through with reports of calls and communication with the children's treatment centers.

***Chris Lite, Aubrey's therapist***

Mr. Lite observes continued progress in Aubrey and reports that she has developed a greater understanding of the effects of her behavior on others. She expresses gratitude and apologizes when she makes mistakes. She is currently at Level II (as of 6/12/07) and will hopefully complete requirements for Level III within a couple weeks.

According to Mr. Lite, many factors accounted for delays in holding the first phone session on 6/6/07. He assured me that *none* of these reasons were Amanda's fault. The delay, lack of follow through, and misunderstandings greatly frustrated Amanda.

***Lori O., Family therapist for Aubrey and Amanda***

On 6/12/07, I spoke with Lori O., the counselor who will be conducting phone sessions with Aubrey and Amanda. She told me that Amanda had wished not to set up a fixed time on Mondays due to her "other appointments" and that she would initiate the call to F Residential. Aubrey would be located and F Residential will place the call to Amanda. Ms. O. was willing to email dates of sessions that take place and how they progress.

***Kim James, Jackson's therapist***

Prior to my June visit to Residential, I received emails from Jackson's counselor, Kim James, indicating that Jackson's behavior was greatly oppositional or that noticeable gains had taken place. Such variability did not seem to correlate with any obvious factors; however, she felt that

deteriorating behavior including disrespectful and confrontational verbal behaviors toward staff and peers was often related to phone calls to his mother. During the first phone session with Jackson, mom and staff, Amanda was described as being supportive and had encouraged him to do his best. The second arranged call did not take place as planned, due to a schedule conflict at Residential that his counselor forgot.

On 6/4/07, the scheduled call went well according to Amanda. Kim James reports that the calls go well. As of 6/12/07, two calls have taken place as arranged. She reports that Jackson is doing well; however, continues to experience bad days.

***Mrs. Bleil, Shiloh's teacher***

Mrs. Bleil reports that Shiloh's behavior fluctuates. She describes "spurts" of non-compliance and "attitude". She is fully capable academically; however, does not work to her full potential. She displays fearfulness and difficulty coping with upsets (ex: she "became hysterical" according to her teacher when an earring was lost on the playground).

***Emma Jones, Shiloh's foster mother***

Mrs. Jones reports problems with Shiloh stealing candy and gum at home in spite of being reminded that "this is wrong". Shiloh exhibits aggression and moodiness if visits with her mother are cancelled. Mrs. Jones also reports that medications to treat bedwetting have not been effective. Her greatest concern at this time is Shiloh's nightmares. She often experiences fitful sleep, flailing about, talking, and crying. It normally requires much effort to wake Shiloh during these episodes and she is not aware of having had any dreams. Although these episodes have occurred off and on since she first came to live with Mrs. Jones, they have never been as prevalent as they have become over the past couple months.

**Strengths of child(ren) and family:**

1. Amanda appears to have begun to make some progress. Her job has helped her gain self confidence, improved her mood and attitude, and she is taking responsibility to be involved in her children's treatment programs. She has begun to recognize the value of respectful communication with others.
2. Aubrey and Jackson have made notable progress within their treatment programs and express a sincere desire to get through, to turn their lives around, and to return "home" to their family.
3. Shiloh continues to make academic gains in the school environment.

**Concerns:**

1. The children continue to miss each other and their time separated from each other seems to contribute to their fluctuation in maintaining an attitude of hopefulness. Sibling visitations are hampered by the children's placements, coupled with Aubrey and Jackson's inability to leave their respective campuses due to their ongoing behavioral issues.
2. Although she is working on communication, Amanda continues to be easily provoked when she is not "in a good mood" and becomes highly irritable. She is later regretful and leaves messages of apologies. This pattern of recognizing mistakes, later followed by

apologies, may be perceived as progress for Amanda; however, this pattern is potentially hurtful/damaging for her children if she is not in a "good mood". It remains crucial that Amanda be involved in therapeutic intervention *with* her children.

3. In the past, Amanda has had no job or money and has shoplifted in order to sell items for cash or for her personal use. She has condoned this behavior with her children and has demonstrated detrimental decision-making when money has been obtained (shoplifting fueling gambling instead of providing for her children's basic needs). Amanda has always expressed a desire to "get her children back" although has not demonstrated a behavioral commitment until recently (since obtaining work). She is proud of having money to pay bills, buy gifts for her children and has bought a cell phone in order for her kids and others to reach her at any time. She is optimistic about her new job and feels that it marks the beginning of a new life for her and her family.

**Recommendations:**

1. I recommend the temporary care, custody and control of the children remain with the IDHS for continued family foster care placement for Shiloh and continued residential treatment placements for Jackson and Aubrey.
2. I recommend permanency be established in the form of a six-month extension as Jackson and Aubrey remain in treatment programs at this time and more time is needed to work on reunification of all the children with their mother, Amanda Myers.
3. I recommend Amanda maintains employment.
4. I recommend Amanda consistently participates in 1:1 or group therapy.
5. I recommend Amanda continues to participate in Aubrey and Jackson's treatment program through telephone sessions every two weeks.
6. I recommend interactions between Amanda and Shiloh be increased at the discretion of the IDHS, CASA and children's attorney/GAL.
7. I recommend interaction for Shiloh and her siblings be provided at their treatment centers.
8. I recommend Amanda refrain from criminal activity.
9. I recommend Amanda participates in a consumer credit counseling program for budgeting and finances through the Help Center.
10. I recommend IDHS continue to explore relative placement options as part of concurrent planning.

**Respectfully submitted by,**

/s/ Miki Getz  
CASA Advocate

This report was filed through the Iowa Electronic Document Management System for registered filers to this case.